



DIRK KEMPTHORNE
GOVERNOR

NEWS RELEASE

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KEMPTHORNE DIRECTS STATE AGENCIES TO PREPARE WEST NILE VIRUS ACTION PLAN

(BOISE) Governor Dirk Kempthorne today instructed the directors of the Idaho Departments of Health and Welfare, Agriculture and Fish and Game to prepare a unified state government response in the event the West Nile Virus is discovered in Idaho.

“I want to take every step necessary to assure that we are prepared to address the health and safety implications this disease may have for Idaho,” Kempthorne said. “This virus has moved rapidly through the United States, and the spread of the virus has implications for Idaho residents, horses and animals.”

The Governor has appointed Health and Welfare Director Karl Kurtz to spearhead Idaho’s response and asked him to work with Agriculture Director Pat Takasugi and Fish and Game Director Steve Huffaker on the state’s action plan.

“I’m asking them to review the current state of preparedness in Idaho to deal with West Nile Virus and to identify any gaps in that preparedness. I also want to see a plan that local and state agencies can use to ensure a coordinated approach to protecting people and animals in a responsible and thoughtful way,” Kempthorne added.

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare has already been working with the Department of Agriculture to promote awareness by Idaho veterinarians and encourage the use of an equine West Nile Virus vaccine. Horses are the only animals for which there is currently a vaccine.

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